United Nations A/C.3/56/L.14

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
15 October 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Third Committee
Agenda item 109
Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

Provisional rules of procedure for the Second World Assembly on Ageing

Note by the Secretariat

By its decision 2001/238, the Economic and Social Council recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

"Provisional rules of procedure for the Second World Assembly on Ageing

"The General Assembly recommends for adoption by the Second World Assembly on Ageing the provisional rules of procedure contained in the annex to the present decision.

"Annex

"Provisional rules of procedure for the Second World Assembly on Ageing

"I. Representation and credentials

"Composition of delegations
"Rule 1

"The delegation of each State participating in the Assembly shall consist of a head of delegation and such other representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

"Alternates and advisers
"Rule 2

"The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

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"Submission of credentials
"Rule 3

"The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the secretariat of the Assembly, if possible not less than one week before the opening of the Assembly. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"Credentials Committee
"Rule 4

"A Credentials Committee of nine members shall be appointed at the beginning of the Assembly. Its composition shall be based on that of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its fifty-sixth session. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Assembly without delay.

"Provisional participation
"Rule 5

"Pending a decision of the Assembly upon their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the Assembly.

"II. Officers

"Elections
"Rule 6

"The Assembly shall elect from among the representatives of participating States the following officers: a President, 27 Vice-Presidents and an ex officio Vice-President from the host country, a Rapporteur-General, and Chairmen for the Main Committee established in accordance with rule 46. These officials shall be elected on the basis of ensuring the representative character of the Bureau composed in accordance with rule 11. The Assembly may also elect such other officers as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

"General powers of the President
"Rule 7

"1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him/her elsewhere by these rules, the President shall preside at the plenary meetings of the Assembly, declare the opening and closing of each meeting, direct the discussions, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to a vote and announce decisions. The President shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order thereat. The President may propose to the Assembly the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times the representative of each participant in the Assembly may speak on a question, the adjournment or the closure of the debate and the suspension or the adjournment of a meeting.

"2. The President, in the exercise of his/her functions, remains under the authority of the Assembly.

"Acting President
"Rule 8

"1. If the President is absent from a meeting or any part thereof, he/she shall designate one of the Vice-Presidents to take his/her place.

"2. A Vice-President acting as President shall have the same powers and duties as the President.

"Replacement of the President
"Rule 9

"If the President is unable to perform his/her functions, a new President shall be elected.

"Voting rights of the President
"Rule 10

"The President, or a Vice-President acting as President, shall not vote, but shall appoint another member of his/her delegation to vote in his/her place.

"III. Bureau

"Composition
"Rule 11

"The President, the Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur-General and the Chairman of the Main Committee, shall constitute the Bureau. The President, or in his/her absence, one of the Vice-Presidents designated by him/her, shall serve as Chairman of the Bureau. The Chairman of the Credentials Committee may participate, without the right to vote, in the Bureau.

"Substitute members
"Rule 12

"If the President or a Vice-President is to be absent during a meeting of the Bureau, he/she may designate a member of his/her delegation to sit and vote in the Bureau. In case of absence, the Chairman of the Main Committee shall designate a Vice-Chairman of the Committee as his/her substitute. When serving on the Bureau, Vice-Chairmen of the Main Committee shall not have the right to vote if they are of the same delegation as another member of the Bureau.

"Functions
"Rule 13

"The Bureau shall assist the President in the general conduct of the business of the Assembly and shall ensure the coordination of its work.

"IV. Secretariat of the Assembly

"Duties of the Secretary-General
"Rule 14

"The Secretary-General of the United Nations, or a member of the secretariat designated by him, shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies.

"Duties of the secretariat
"Rule 15

"The secretariat of the Assembly shall, in accordance with these rules:

(a) Interpret speeches made at meetings;

(b) Receive, translate, reproduce and circulate the documents of the Assembly;

(c) Make and arrange for the keeping of sound recordings of meetings;

(d) Publish and circulate the report and official records of the Assembly;

(e) Arrange for the custody of the documents and records of the Assembly in the archives of the United Nations;

(f) Generally perform all other work that the Assembly may require in connection with its proceedings.

"Statements by the secretariat
"Rule 16

"The Secretary-General of the United Nations, or any member of the secretariat designated for that purpose, may at any time make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

"V. Opening of the Assembly

"Temporary President
"Rule 17

"At the opening of the first meeting of the Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations or, in his absence, his representative, shall preside until the Assembly has elected its President.

"Decisions concerning organization
"Rule 18

"The Assembly shall, at its first meeting:

(a) Adopt its rules of procedure;

(b) Elect its officers and constitute its subsidiary bodies;

(c) Adopt its agenda, the draft of which shall, until such adoption, be the provisional agenda of the Assembly;

(d) Decide on the organization of its work.

"VI. Conduct of business

"Quorum
"Rule 19

"The President may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when representatives of at least one third of the States participating in the Assembly are present. The presence of representatives of a majority of such States so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.

"Speeches
"Rule 20

"1. No one may address the Assembly without having previously obtained the permission of the President. Subject to rules 21 and 22 and 24 to 28, the President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they draw lots.

"2. Debate shall be confined to the question before the Assembly and the President may call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

"3. The time allowed for speakers will be seven minutes. The Assembly may limit the number of times each participant may speak on any question. Permission to speak on a motion to set such limits shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour of and two opposing such limits, after which the motion shall be immediately put to a vote. In any event, with the consent of the Assembly, the President shall limit each intervention on procedural matters to five minutes. When the debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the President shall call him/her to order without delay.

"Points of order
"Rule 21

"During the discussion of any matter, a representative may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with these rules. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to a vote, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the representatives present and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

"Precedence
"Rule 22

"The Chairman or Rapporteur of the Main Committee or a representative designated by any other subsidiary body, may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by the body.

"Closing of the list of speakers
"Rule 23

"During the course of a debate, the President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Assembly, declare the list closed.

"Right of reply
"Rule 24

"1. Notwithstanding rule 23, the President shall accord the right of reply to a representative of any State participating in the Assembly who requests it. Any other representative may be granted the opportunity to make a reply.

"2. The statements made under this rule shall normally be made at the end of the last meeting of the day, or at the conclusion of the consideration of the relevant item if that is sooner.

"3. The representatives of a State may make no more than two statements under this rule at a given meeting on any item. The first shall be limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes; representatives shall in any event attempt to be as brief as possible.

"Adjournment of debate
"Rule 25

"A representative of any State participating in the Assembly may at any time move the adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour and two opposing the adjournment, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to a vote.

"Closure of debate
"Rule 26

"A representative of any State participating in the Assembly may at any time move the closure of the debate on the question under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified his/her wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives opposing the closure, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to a vote.

"Suspension or adjournment of the meeting
"Rule 27

"Subject to rule 38, a representative of any State participating in the Assembly may at any time move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. No discussion on such motions shall be permitted and they shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to a vote.

"Order of motions
"Rule 28

"The motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all proposals or other motions before the meeting:

(a) To suspend the meeting;

(b) To adjourn the meeting;

(c) To adjourn the debate on the question under discussion;

(d) To close the debate on the question under discussion.

"Submission of proposals and substantive amendments
"Rule 29

"Proposals and substantive amendments shall normally be submitted in writing to the secretariat of the Assembly, which shall circulate copies to all delegations. Unless the Assembly decides otherwise, substantive proposals shall be discussed or put to a decision no earlier than 24 hours after copies have been circulated in all languages of the Assembly to all delegations. The President may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments, even though these amendments have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.

"Withdrawal of proposals and motions
"Rule 30

"A proposal or a motion may be withdrawn by its sponsor at any time before a decision on it has been taken, provided that it has not been amended. A proposal or a motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any representative.

"Decisions on competence
"Rule 31

"Subject to rule 28, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Assembly to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to a vote before a vote is taken on the proposal in question.

"Reconsideration of proposals
"Rule 32

"When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered unless the Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded to only two speakers opposing reconsideration, after which the motion shall be immediately put to a vote.

"VII. Decision-making

"General agreement
"Rule 33

"The Assembly shall make its best endeavours to ensure that its work is accomplished by general agreement.

"Voting rights
"Rule 34

"Each State participating in the Assembly shall have one vote.

"Majority required
"Rule 35

"1. Subject to rule 33, decisions of the Assembly on all matters of substance shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting.

"2. Except as otherwise provided in these rules, decisions of the Assembly on all matters of procedure shall be taken by a majority of the representatives present and voting.

"3. If the question arises whether a matter is one of procedure or of substance, the President of the Assembly shall rule on the question. An appeal against this ruling shall be put to a vote immediately, and the President's ruling shall stand unless it is overruled by a majority of the representatives present and voting.

"4. If a vote is equally divided, the proposal or motion shall be regarded as rejected.

"Meaning of the phrase 'representatives present and voting'
"Rule 36

"For the purpose of these rules, the phrase 'representatives present and voting' means representatives casting an affirmative or negative vote. Representatives who abstain from voting shall be regarded as not voting.

"Method of voting
"Rule 37

"1. Except as provided in rule 44, the Assembly shall normally vote by show of hands, except that a representative may request a roll-call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the States participating in the Assembly, beginning with the delegation whose name is drawn by lot by the President. The name of each State shall be called in all roll-calls and its representative shall reply 'yes', 'no' or 'abstention'.

"2. When the Assembly votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of hands and a recorded vote shall replace a roll-call. A representative may request a recorded vote, which shall, unless a representative requests otherwise, be taken without calling out the names of the States participating in the Assembly.

"3. The vote of each State participating in a roll-call or a recorded vote shall be inserted in any record of or report on the Assembly.

"Conduct during voting
"Rule 38

"After the President has announced the commencement of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the process of voting.

"Explanation of vote
"Rule 39

"Representatives may make brief statements, consisting solely of explanations of vote, before the voting has commenced or after the voting has been completed. The President may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations. The representative of a State sponsoring a proposal or motion shall not speak in explanation of vote thereon, except if it has been amended.

"Division of proposals
"Rule 40

"A representative may move that parts of a proposal be voted on separately. If a representative objects, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour of and two opposing the division. If the motion is carried, those parts of the proposal that are subsequently approved shall be put to the Assembly for decision as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal have been rejected, the proposal shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

"Amendments
"Rule 41

"A proposal is considered an amendment to another proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal. Unless specified otherwise, the word 'proposal' in these rules shall be considered as including amendments.

"Order of voting on amendments
"Rule 42

"When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Assembly shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom and so on until all the amendments have been put to a vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter shall not be put to a vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

"Order of voting on proposals
"Rule 43

"1. If two or more proposals, other than amendments, relate to the same question, they shall, unless the Assembly decides otherwise, be voted on in the order in which they were submitted. The Assembly may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

"2. Revised proposals shall be voted on in the order in which the original proposals were submitted, unless the revision substantially departs from the original proposal. In that case, the original proposal shall be considered as withdrawn and the revised proposal shall be treated as a new proposal.

"3. A motion requiring that no decision be taken on a proposal shall be put to a vote before a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

"Elections
"Rule 44

"All elections shall be held by secret ballot, unless, in the absence of any objection, the Assembly decides to proceed without taking a ballot when there is an agreed candidate or slate.

"Rule 45

"1. When one or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast and the largest number of votes, shall be elected.

"2. If the number of candidates obtaining such a majority is less than the number of places to be filled, additional ballots shall be held to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates obtaining the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, in a number not exceeding twice the number of places remaining to be filled.

"VIII. Subsidiary bodies

"Main Committees
"Rule 46

"The Assembly may establish a Main Committee and, other working groups, as needed, which may be set up in accordance with the practice of other United Nations conferences.

"Representation on the Main Committee
"Rule 47

"Each State participating in the Assembly may be represented by one representative on the Main Committee. Each State may assign to the Committee such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

"Other subsidiary bodies
"Rule 48

"The Assembly and the Main Committee may establish such working groups as they deem necessary for the performance of their functions.

"Officers
"Rule 49

"Except as provided in rule 6 or otherwise decided, each subsidiary body shall elect its own officers.

"Procedures of subsidiary bodies
"Rule 50

"Unless otherwise decided by the Assembly, these rules apply, mutatis mutandis, to the subsidiary bodies, except that:

(a) A majority of the representatives on the Credentials Committee shall constitute a quorum;

(b) The Chairmen of the Main Committee or a working group may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when representatives of at least one quarter of the States participating in the Assembly are present;

(c) The Chairmen of the Bureau, Credentials Committee and working groups may exercise the right to vote in those bodies;

(d) Decisions of committees and working groups shall be taken by a majority of the representatives present and voting, except that the reconsideration of a proposal shall require the majority established by rule 32.

"IX. Languages and records

"Languages of the Assembly
"Rule 51

"Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the languages of the Assembly.

"Interpretation
"Rule 52

"1. Speeches made in a language of the Assembly shall be interpreted into other such languages.

"2. A representative may speak in a language other than a language of the Assembly if he/she provides for interpretation into one such language.

"Languages of official documents
"Rule 53

"Official documents of the Assembly shall be made available in the languages of the Assembly.

"Sound recordings of meetings
"Rule 54

"Sound recordings of meetings of the Assembly and of the Main Committee shall be made and kept in accordance with the practice of the United Nations. Unless otherwise decided, no such recordings shall be made of the meetings of any working group.

"X. Open and closed meetings

"General principles
"Rule 55

"1. The plenary meetings of the Assembly and the meetings of the Main Committee shall be open unless the body concerned decides otherwise. All decisions taken by the plenary of the Assembly at a closed meeting shall be announced at an early open meeting of the plenary.

"2. As a general rule, meetings of other bodies of the Assembly shall be closed.

"XI. Other participants and observers

"Representatives of entities, intergovernmental organizations and other entities which have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the capacity of observer in the sessions and work of all international conferences convened under its auspices
"Rule 56

"Representatives designated by intergovernmental organizations and other entities that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the sessions and work of all international conferences convened under its auspices have the right to participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the World Assembly, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any working group.

"Associate members of regional commissions
"Rule 57

"Representatives designated by the footnoted associate members of regional commissions[1] may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Assembly, the Main Committee, the Hearing Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group.

"Representatives of the specialized agencies[2]
"Rule 58

"Representatives designated by the specialized agencies may participate, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Assembly, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

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[1] American Samoa, Anguilla, Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Marian Islands, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, New Caledonia, Niue, Puerto Rico, United States Virgin Islands.

[2] For the purposes of these rules, the term "specialized agencies" includes the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Trade Organization, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

"Representatives of other intergovernmental organizations
"Rule 59

"Representatives designated by interested intergovernmental organizations invited to the Assembly may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Assembly, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

"Representatives of interested United Nations organs
"Rule 60

"Representatives designated by interested organs of the United Nations may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Assembly, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

"Representatives of non-governmental organizations
"Rule 61

"1. Non-governmental organizations accredited to participate in the Assembly may designate representatives to sit as observers at open meetings of the Assembly and the Main Committee.

"2. Representatives from non-governmental organizations accredited to the Assembly can make statements in the Main Committee.

"3. Given the availability of time, a limited number of accredited non-governmental organizations may also make statements in the plenary of the Assembly. Non-governmental organizations should be requested to select their spokespersons among themselves, and should provide the list thereof to the President of the Assembly to present the list of selected non-governmental organizations to Member States in a timely manner for approval and to ensure that such selection is made on an equal and transparent basis, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation and diversity of non-governmental organizations.

"Written statements
"Rule 62

"Written statements submitted by the designated representatives referred to in rules 56 to 61 shall be distributed by the secretariat to all delegations in the quantities and in the language in which the statements are made available to it at the site of the Assembly, provided that a statement submitted on behalf of a non-governmental organization is related to the work of the Assembly and is on a subject in which the organization has a special competence. Written statements shall not be issued at United Nations expense and shall not be issued as official documents.

"XII. Amendment and suspension of the rules of procedure

"Method of amendment
"Rule 63

"These rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the Assembly taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, after the Bureau has reported on the proposed amendment.

"Method of suspension
"Rule 64

"Any of these rules may be suspended by the Assembly provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given, which may be waived if no representative objects. Any such suspension shall be limited to a specific and stated purpose and to a period required to achieve that purpose."